

Wm. D. Stuenkel
Compliments

Annual Report

UPON THE

HEALTH AND SANITARY CONDITION

OF THE

AMBLE URBAN DISTRICT

For the Year ending December 31st, 1905.

J. WINTER, TYPO, AMBLE.

Annual Report

of the

Medical Officer of Health

for Year ending Dec. 31st, 1905.

Physical Features.

GENTLEMEN,

The urban district of Amble wedged in between the rural districts of Morpeth on the one hand and Alnwick on the other comprises some 1218 acres in extent. Being on the immediate coast-line there is practically no altitude beyond the sea level. It is fully exposed to the easterly and north-easterly gales which are by no means infrequent in the winter, but in the summer and autumn the climate is most invigorating and like other seaside resorts on the north-east coast is invaluable in restoring the spent energies of the confined man of business and building up of impaired constitutions the result of severe illnesses. Indeed as a sanatorium one could hardly find its equal in the district, for with the sea in front washing on to a sandy beach which extends for miles to north and south of the harbour, and the hills of Rothbury, Felton, and Newton-on-the-Moor behind, one has the choice of climate to suit the needs either of temperament or the most exacting physical want. During the past year the climatic conditions have been most seasonable. A cold dry winter, an early spring, a warm summer and autumn, tempered with continuous fresh sea breezes leading into a very mild winter, have adduced materially to the low death-rate which is recorded elsewhere.

Inhabitants ; Popluation and Occupation.

The population taken at the last census 1901 was 4426 but at present the more correct figure would be 5000. The larger proportion of the male adult population are engaged in the collieries of Broomhill and Radcliff, the former three miles, the latter one and a half miles distant. The remainder comprises tradesmen and the employees of the Warkworth Harbour. The healthy occupation of the inhabitants tends to maintain the high standard of health in the district.

House Accommodation etc.

This compares very favourably with other towns similarly situated. Roughly speaking there are the old and the new buildings. Amongst the former are many whose sanitary conditions do not in every way reach the standard of to-day's requirements. I refer more especially to those single-roomed houses where there is no through ventilation, to others where privy middens still hold sway, and to others where refuse heaps come dangerously near the dwellings themselves and from whence removal of excreta has to take place by wheeling through covered passage ways. A full report on these places is being prepared by the Inspector of Nuisances and it is to be hoped that in a short time the town will have bade farewell to the old type of dwelling with its doubtful sanitary conveniences and have nothing else than what is entirely modern in sanitation if not in structure. All plans of houses proposing to be built or altered are submitted to the Council so that any sanitary defect is questioned and rectified before the structure is commenced. The dwellings themselves are in the majority of cases cleanly and tidily kept, but there are not a few tenants of houses who if they obeyed even the elementary demands of cleanliness would profit greatly thereby, saving themselves not only sickness, but mitigating considerably the anxiety of the sanitary officers of the Council.

Birth Rate.

One hundred and forty nine births were registered during the year, of which 71 were males and 78 females. This gives a birth rate of 29·8 per 1000 which is a slight increase on that for 1904, and about 4 per 1000 less than the average for the previous ten years. It indicates a natural healthy increase.

Mortality.

The number of deaths registered during the year at all ages was 56, and gives a death rate of 11·2 per 1000, which is the lowest death rate I can find recorded in the town's statistics. It compares well with the average for the past ten years which is 13·8 per 1000. From the total given may be deducted 5 deaths from accident, and 1 from suicide, which leaves 50 deaths due to disease, and a corrected death rate of 10 per 1000.

Analysis of Death Rate.

Of the 56 deaths recorded above 31 were males and 25 females, and they were distributed over the year as follows:—

January	7	May	7	September	3
February	5	June	4	October	4
March	5	July	1	November	3
April	5	August	6	December	6

INFANTILE DEATHS.

There were 16 deaths of infants under the age of 1 year, giving a slightly increased infantile death rate of 3·2 per 1000. The rate per 1000 children born is 107·4 as compared with 141·9 the average of the last ten years.

The causes were:—tubercular diseases 3, pneumonia 1, and congenital disabilities 12, a great many of the latter existing only a few days. For another year the town has been free from the scourge of infantile summer Diarrhoea and one has reason to hope that the lessons learned from past misfortunes may never be forgotten, so that by the most minute care exercised over the baby, the choice of its food, and the vessel from which it is served, we shall be spared such visitations as the town has not been a stranger to in the past. Referring to the infantile death rate one could not help but notice that the physical development of a very large number of newly-born children was much below the standard. This I believe to be due in many cases to the insufficiency of nutritious support taken by the mother during pregnancy. Low wages and large families I consider to have taken an important part in this.

OTHER DEATHS.

Between the ages of 1 and 5 years there were 8 deaths, the causes being diphtheria 1, tubercular diseases 2, other causes 5. Between 5 and 15 years there were 4 deaths, 2 being

due to scarlet fever, and 2 to general causes. Between 15 and 25, four, of which 3 were the subjects of coroner's enquiries, and 1 to phthisis. Between 25 and 65, seventeen, amongst which there were 1 case each of cancer, pneumonia, phthisis, and alcoholic excess, 3 cases of heart disease, the balance being from general causes, with the exception of 2 cases of accidental death. Above 65 years of age 6 cases were practically due to senility, whilst 1 was due to accident. The number of deaths from tubercular disease practically remains constant whilst the number of deaths from malignant disease has been reduced by three, there having been four in the previous year.

Infectious Disease.

During the year 21 cases of Scarlatina were notified. These occurred in 17 houses. They were all of a mild type with the exception of 2 cases which unfortunately ended fatally. These cases seem to have come in the wake of the epidemic of the previous year, as the local conditions were satisfactory and no sanitary defect likely to cause the fever was in any case found.

There were also 3 cases of Erysipelas, 3 cases of Enteric fever, and 1 of Puerperal fever. In one house, where 2 of the 3 cases of Enteric occurred, it was brought from another district where the victims had been staying as was evidenced by others staying in the same part having also contracted it. These cases were most virulent, but by complete isolation and disinfection, and the daily attention of the council's servants to the removal of the excreta, any further spread was prevented.

No cases of infectious disease on ships entering the harbour were reported.

Water Supply.

This has again amply supplied the needs of the district. The reservoirs have been periodically inspected by the Medical Officer and the Inspector, and even in the driest part of the summer season have given no cause for anxiety. The quality of the water although hard is of a very high standard and by the way it is collected and conveyed to the town chances of poisonous contamination are most remote. There has been as in past years a large quantity sold for trade purposes.

Milk Supply.

This has continued good and plentiful, and in cases where samples were taken and tested the percentage of cream was fully up to the standard. In no case has infectious disease been traceable to the milk supply.

Sewage and Drainage.

This has been efficient as in past years. The sewers have been periodically flushed, and in cases where infectious disease existed the drains have been well looked after by the Council's officers. There remains however one serious menace to the attractiveness of the town, and that is the open burn at the foot of the Wynd into which one or two large drains are emptied. Besides being an eyesore, the smell from time to time is very bad. It is early noticed by visitors, and its presence might possibly deter their coming into the town besides the important fact of its close proximity to certain dwelling houses. It is to be hoped that before long it may be either done away with or closed in.

Scavenging.

This part of the Council's work has been successfully and thoroughly carried out. The difficulties are not a few, as for instance, where midden heaps lie behind premises to which there is no back road of access ; in these cases the excreta, etc. has to be wheeled through passages some of which are covered and others unpaved. The present system under the Council's own control is a vast improvement on the old one of contracting, and I have no hesitation in saying that the town has materially benefitted in healthfulness, and the death rate been lowered by the thoroughness with which the work has been done. A complete water carriage system throughout the town is an ideal which the Council must ever have before it to ensure the even better health of the inhabitants.

Slaughter Houses.

A regular inspection of these has taken place and no infringement of the Council's bye-laws has been found to have taken place.

Bake Houses and Mineral Water Manufactories.

These have been kept in a clean and sanitary condition and have given satisfaction whenever visited. Their products maintain their reputed wholesome character.

Factories and Workshops.

These have been regularly inspected under the act of 1901. Young people serving in them have been examined as to physical ability, while various suggestions^b as to ventilation and for the comfort of the employees have readily met with the acquiescence of the owners. Accidents occurring have been duly notified to the Certifying Factory Surgeon, with the exception of one or two cases where this infringement of the Factory Act was reported to His Majesty's Inspector of Factories.

Lodging Houses.

These have been found to be as satisfactory as the situation will allow. Upon inspection from time to time, they have presented a cleanly appearance.

Isolation Hospital.

There have been no cases for admittance during the year, but the hospital is kept in readiness for the immediate admission of any cases which may demand isolation.

Port Sanitation.

This has fully come up to the standard of past years. On the whole, more cases of sickness on vessels entering the harbour have been reported than in previous years. Although some have been very suspicious, none have been found to demand stringent measures. A code of rules for the guidance of ships upon which infectious disorders exist, is being prepared by the council, and will act as an additional safeguard against the importation of infectious disease into the town in this particular way.

General Survey of 1905.

In conclusion Gentlemen, I have once again to report the most satisfactory condition of the town, both in health and sanitation. Looking over the work of the past year, much has been done by the council to bring about the present healthful state of the district. The making up of back lanes, the careful removal of house refuse and offal, the thorough scavenging of the public streets, and attention to the drainage requirements, have done more towards this than can be recorded on paper. The fact that there were 24 deaths less than in the previous year thus constituting the lowest death rate, speaks itself of a successful year's work, and should cause much gratification. But the work of a council in a district such as this is never done; far from it, for as the days go by, there seems even more to do. But if, however, what falls to our hands to do, is done with all our might and with the great ideal of the public weal in view, and if from the inhabitants of our town we receive that hearty co-operation which we cannot deny has been given in the past, there will be even better conditions to report in the future, and the sting of household distress, such as regards sickness and death, will diminish more and more.

For the ready help received from the hands of the Council and from its officers, also from the Medical Officer of the County, I desire to record my grateful thanks.

I am Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

HENRY MARTYN STUMBLES, M.B.

(Medical Officer of Health).

TABLE I.
A M B L E D I S T R I C T .
FOR WHOLE DISTRICT.

YEAR	Population estimated to middle of each Year	BIRTHS		DEATHS under One Year of Age		DEATHS at all ages. Total	
		Number	Rate*	Number	Rate per 1,000 Births- register'd	Number	Rate*
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1895	4,000	143	35'75	25	174'8	71	17'75
1896	4,000	142	35'5	19	133'8	58	14'5
1897	4,500	143	31'7	25	174'8	65	14'4
1898	4,500	156	34'66	23	147'4	66	14'6
1899	4,500	138	30'66	33	139'0	69	15'3
1900	4,500	160	35'5	18	112'5	52	11'46
1901	4,426	158	35'1	25	158'2	67	14'8
1902	4,650	170	36'5	15	88'2	55	11'8
1903	5,000	173	34'6	16	92'4	71	14'2
1904	5,000	142	28'4	14	98'6	80	16'0
Averages for years 1895-1904	4,507'6	152'5	33'8	21'3	141'9	65'4	14'8
1905	5,000	149	29'8	16	107'4	56	11'2

*Rates in Columns 4 and 8 calculated per 1000 of estimated population.

NOTE. The deaths to be included in Column 7 of this Table are the whole of those registered during the year as having actually occurred within the district or division.

Total population at all ages, 4,426

Number of inhabitants houses 950

Average number of persons per house, 4.7

Area of District in acres (exclusive of area covered by water), 1,218.

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At Census
of 1901.

TABLE II.

AMBLE DISTRICT.

VITAL STATISTICS IN 1905 AND PREVIOUS YEARS.

NAME OF LOCALITY.	AMBLE.			
YEAR.	Population estimated to middle of each year.	Births registered.	Deaths at all ages	Deaths under 1 year
	<i>a</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>c</i>	<i>d</i>
1895	4,000	143	71	25
1896	4,000	142	58	19
1897	4,500	163	65	25
1898	4,500	156	66	23
1899	4,500	138	69	33
1900	4,500	160	52	18
1901	4,426	158	67	25
1902	4,650	170	55	15
1903	5,000	173	71	16
1904	5,000	142	80	14
Averages of years 1895 to 1904	4,507.6	152.5	65.4	21.3
1905	5,000	149	56	16

TABLE III.

A M B L E D I S T R I C T .

CASES OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE NOTIFIED DURING THE YEAR 1905.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT.							TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED IN EACH LOCALITY.		
	At ages—Years.									
	At all ages	Under 1	1 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 65	65 & up'rds	1	2	3
Diphtheria	...	2	2							
Enteric Fever	...	3			2	1				
Erysipelas	...	3				3				
Scarlet Fever	...	21	12	8	1					
Puerperal Fever	...	1				1				
Totals	...	30	14	8	3	5				

TABLE IV.

AMBLE DISTRICT.

CAUSES OF, AND AGES AT, DEATH DURING YEAR 1905.

CAUSES OF DEATH.		DEATHS IN OR BELONGING TO WHOLE DISTRICT AT SUBJOINED AGES.						
		All ages	Under 1	1 and under 5	5 and under 15	15 and under 25	25 and under 65	65 and upwards
Scarlet Fever	...	2			2			
Diphtheria and Membranous Croup	...	1		1				
Epidemic Influenza	...							
Enteritis	...	1					1	
Puerperal Fever	...							
Plithisis	...	2				1	1	
Other Tubercular Diseases	...	5	3	2			1	
Cancer (malignant disease)	...	1						
Bronchitis	...							
Pneumonia	...	1					1	
Pleurisy	...							
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs	...							
Alcoholism (Cirrhosis of Liver)	...	1		3			1	
Diseases of Parturition	...	16	13					
Premature Birth & Congenital Debility	...							
Heart Disease	...	3					3	1
Accidents	...	5				2	2	
Suicides	...	1				1		
Senile Decay	...							
Nervous and Brain Diseases	...							
All other causes	...	17		2	2		7	6
Totals	...	56	16	8	4	4	17	7

